

PRESIDENT MOUL: Senator Kristensen.

SENATOR KRISTENSEN: Thank you, Madam President and members of the Legislature. I find people who rise on both sides strenuously to either oppose or reject this rule suspension. And I guess, as I've listened to the debate, I see several facts. And the facts are there probably are enough votes to suspend the rules this morning. But the other facts, that are certainly plain, that are out there are that this does have, I believe, very little to do with tax policy. It has everything to do with political promises made in campaigns, campaigns in the past, campaigns in the future, and we thus dance around the issue, is this going to be the end all of tax? No, not at all. But you've got a promise that's been made, I'm going to change this and I'm going to live up to that promise, and here's how I'm going to do it. And I think the other facts that belie this body are that there are only so many changes we're going to make in income taxes this year. And if you vote for this bill at this point in time, that's just one less opportunity I think we have to deal with the area of income taxes. At the end of this session, we may well be faced with the idea that we'll have to look at some sort of income tax increases, maybe not, maybe they'll be sales taxes, maybe they'll be all sorts of other ones. But we certainly will have in the mix the opportunity to examine income tax increases. And from my point of view, you can only make so many changes in a year, and members of this body will come and say, well, we made the income tax changes early in the session, that's off the table. It will give them an excuse to walk away from that. And from a policy point of view, I don't think that that's a good thing to do. I don't believe that the system was that flawed. I think it was based on promises, be they political. Does it make some good changes in the system? Perhaps, but I think it's more in the nature of a blemish and facial cream that may well turn ugly after a while when we find out that this has raised too much money or not enough money. And I think we've made those statements prior. Only time will tell whether it does or does not do what the Governor thinks it will do. And I guess, at this point, I may well be willing to...to let them go, and let's see what does happen. I have grave doubts that it's going to do...and my fear is it's not going to raise enough money and it's going to contribute to our budget shortfall in the future years, particularly after the amendments that were added to it. I think the bill makes great politics. Unfortunately, I think that if this body today does suspend the rules, I think the bill